

March 7, 2013

State of Connecticut General Assembly  
Members of the Public Health Committee

**Re: Public Hearing of 8 March, 2013 Regarding S.B. 374; Mental Health  
Assessment For Public School and Home School Children**

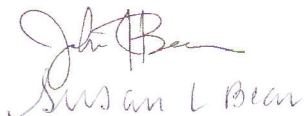
Dear Senators and Legislatures:

Your efforts to increase the safety of Connecticut's public schools are appreciated. There have been several reasonable proposals from the committee pertaining to intervention, case management, treatment, insurance coverage and the shortage of psychiatric professionals. However, we have written this letter to oppose S.B. #374. Our opposition is made largely on a constitutional basis, in that if it is enacted, such legislation will violate parental rights and infringe on the right to privacy. It appears that in the haste to create new law, not enough emphasis has been made of the fact that the recent massacres in public facilities were committed by young men who had known serious mental disorders. A reasonable argument can be made that these heinous acts were in part due to failures by the responsible public health agencies to adequately monitor and administer to the needs of very seriously ill young men under existing legislation and as such, failed to secure the safety of the public at large. We do not believe that subjecting all children to psycho-analyses throughout their developmental years is a warranted, nor a reasonable response to the Newtown tragedy.

There are several other shortfalls to S.B. #374 aside from the questionable constitutionality of the proposal. The proposed bill lacks specificity regarding the infrastructure and financial means by which such a program would be implemented. The text is vague with respect to what will be assessed, the selection and qualification of the assessment providers, access to personal information, an appeals process and liability issues. S.B. #374 appears to have been hastily prepared, and thus does not adequately define all aspects of the proposed program.

A more practical approach may involve making changes to the existing IDEA and State special education laws to improve identification, intervention, treatment, management and access to the programs. Any legislation involving our children, must safeguard parental rights and the children's privacy.

Very truly yours;

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "John & Susan Bear".

John and Susan Bear  
Colchester, Connecticut